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ADNER WARD
THE BOY CHRISTIAN
The Christ Life in Childhood



G. S. ANDERSON

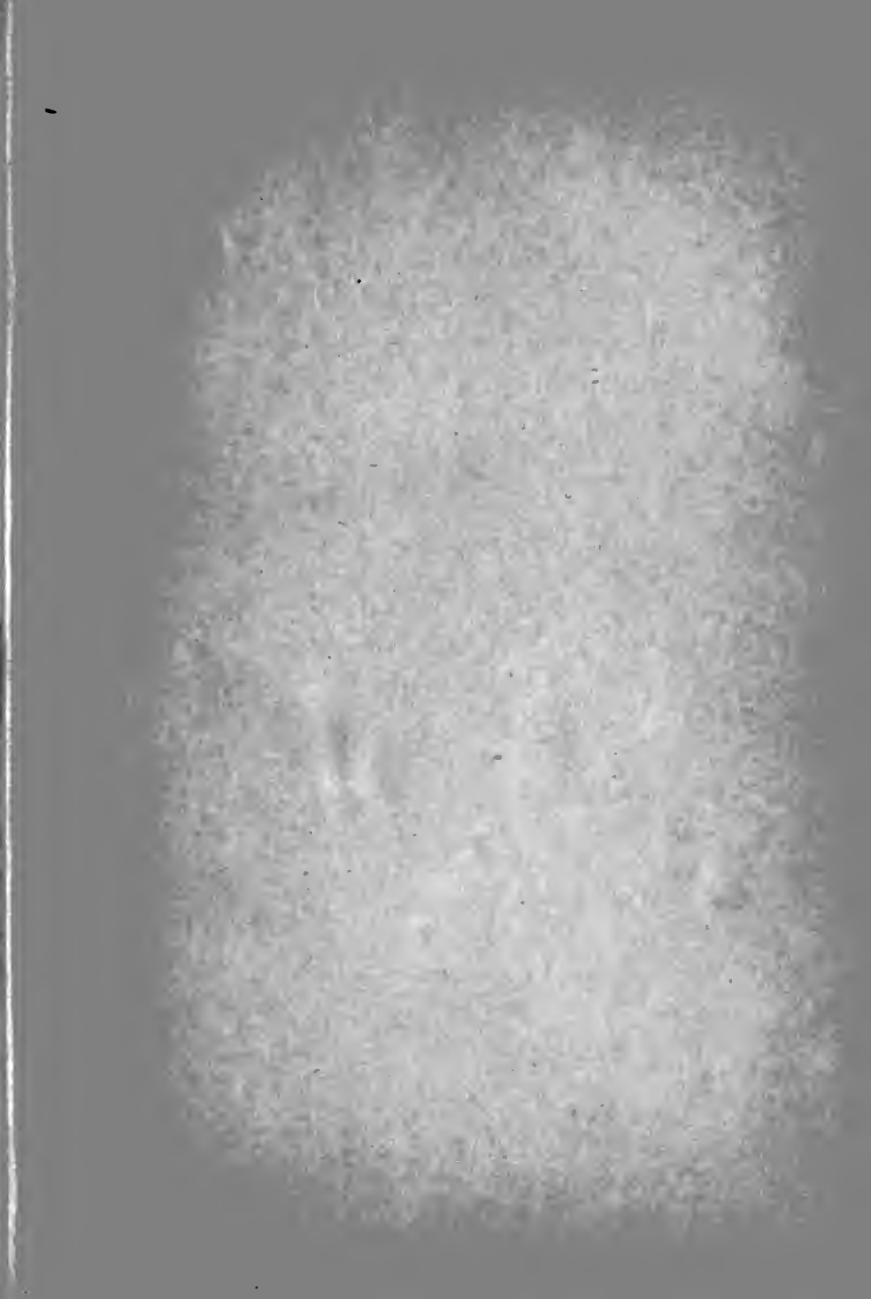


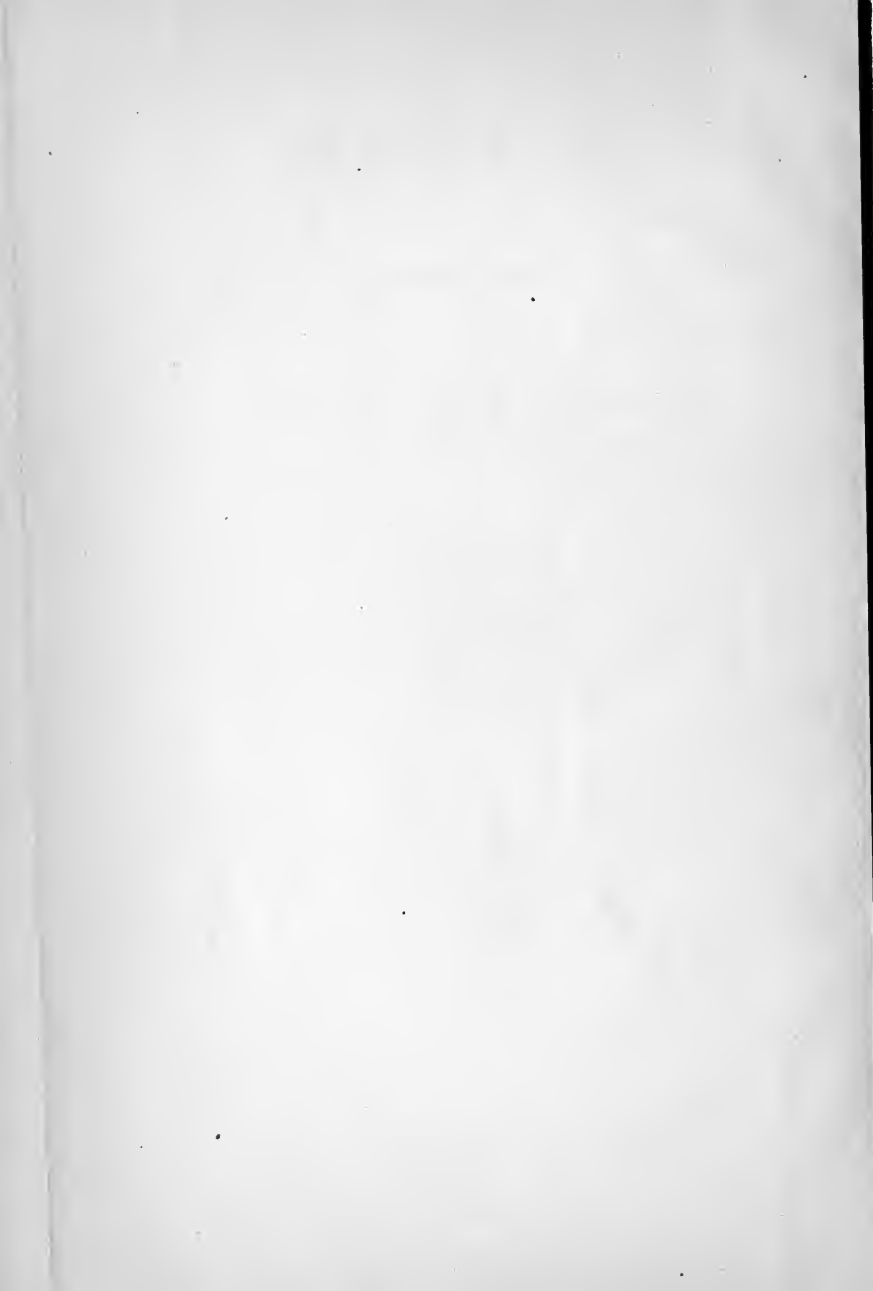
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ADNER WARD

THE BOY CHRISTIAN

THE CHRIST-LIFE IN CHILDHOOD

BY

G. S. ANDERSON.

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LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

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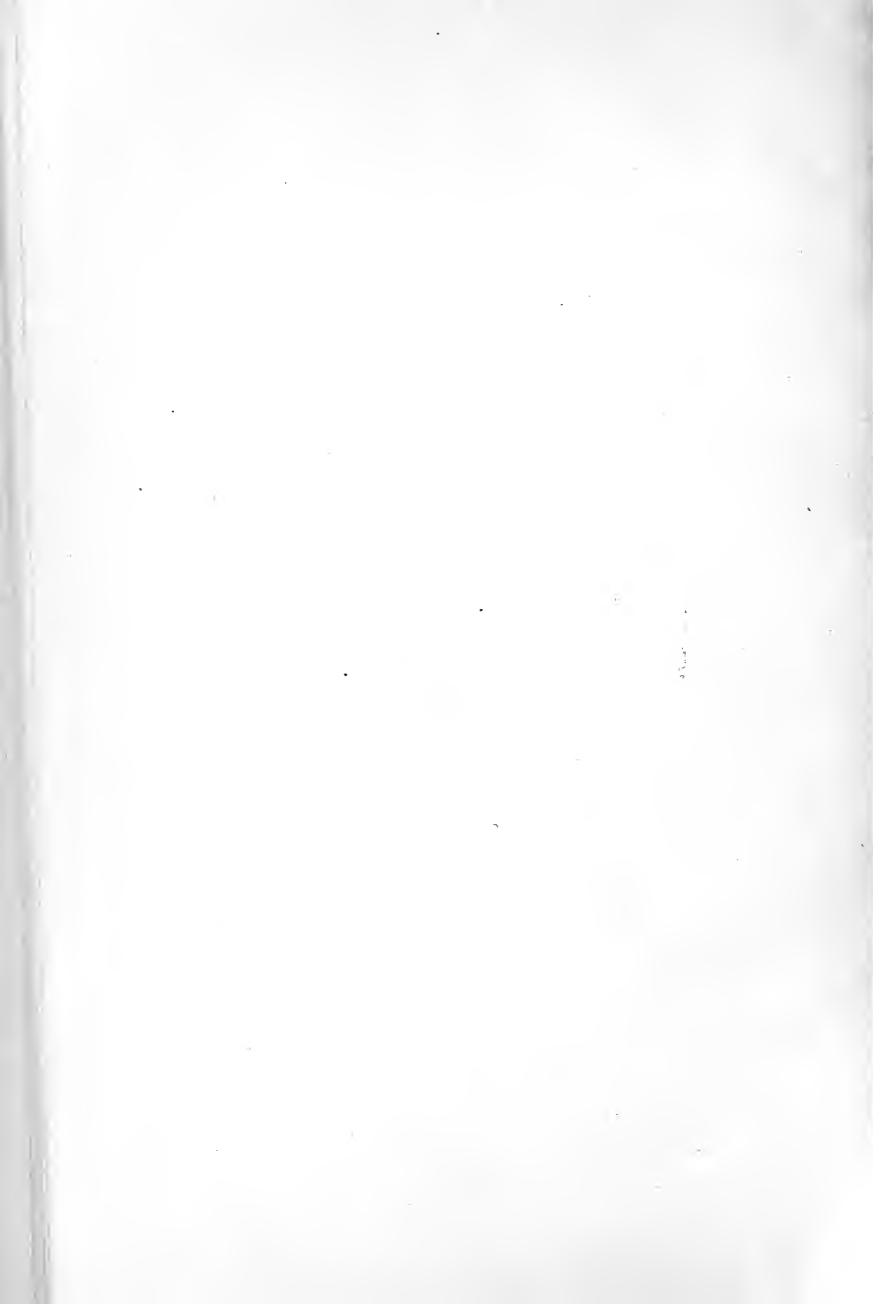
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By G. S. ANDERSON

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ADNER WARD
At the Age of Seven Years.

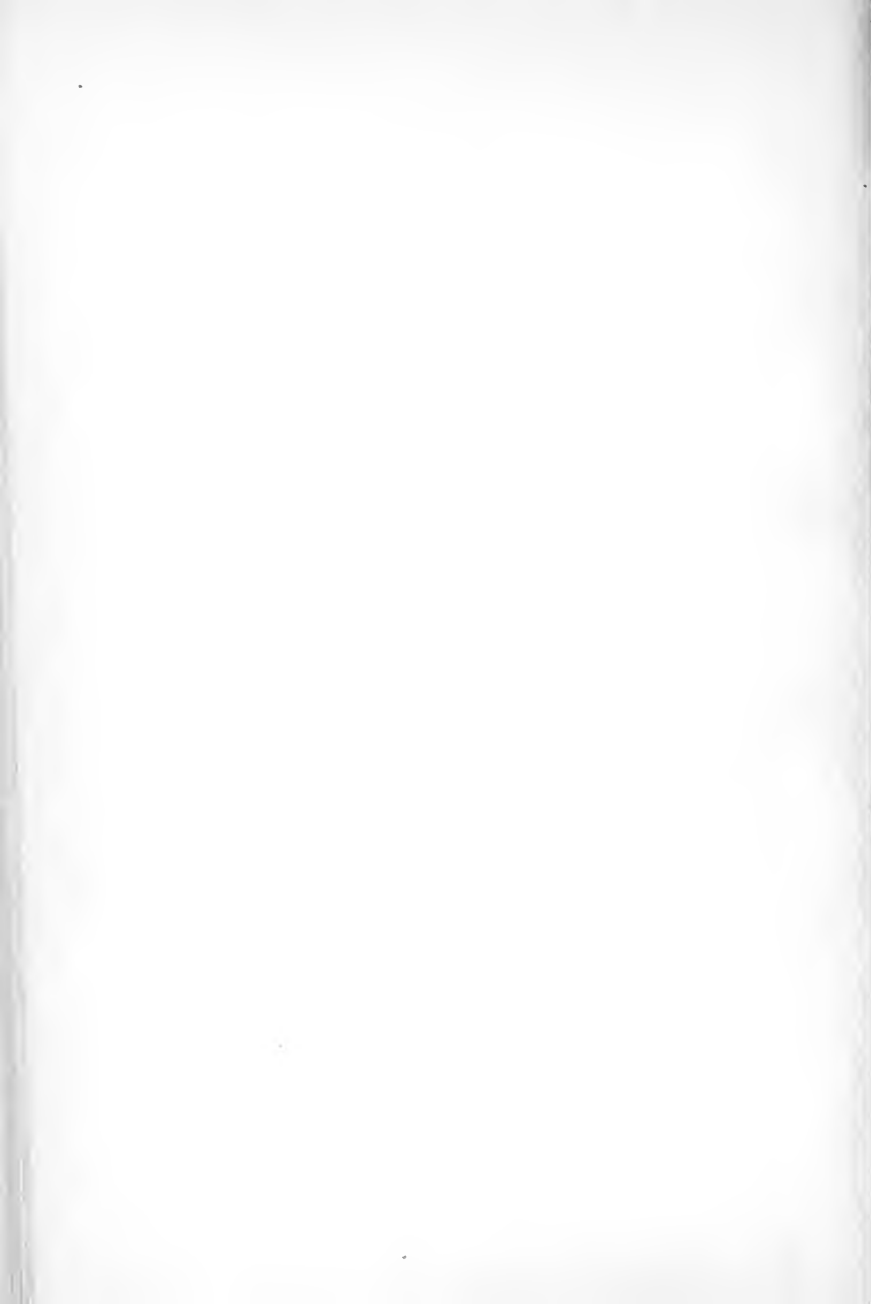


PREFACE.

Adner Ward was a real boy and not an imaginary character as some have supposed. Not a single fact is given in this biography that did not occur in connection with his life. The picture the frontispiece is a photograph taken when seven years of age. We have written it hoping to enlist the young in the higher ideals of life and stimulate in them the enthusiasm of youthful piety, also to comfort the bereaved parent, and draw the line between human responsibility and God's sovereignty.

Adner died when nine years and ten months old. We trust the life of the subject of our story may enlist and profit the reader as it has moved the author to deep interest and real enthusiasm.

THE AUTHOR.



Adner Ward, the Boy Christian.

THE HOME.

Just half mile below Eolin, the Blocton junction, on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, may be seen, from the car window, in passing, a residence of the farm order, sitting on a precipice or well-rounded cliff, seventy-five feet above the iron rails of the track. The house occupies the crest of a natural mound, whose base covers several acres of ground, and would be mistaken for an Indian mound which abound on American rivers but for the Geological formation of the various stratas of earth of which it is formed. The house was built just in the center of a half acre plateau, and looks out on the broken jagged chain of hills, covered with forest trees, that rise in front, and in the rear down upon the railroad, that runs in

the valley, almost under the eaves. Each passing train breaks the monotony of rural life, and supplies fresh entertainment for the occupants of the home. Friends are often recognized, as their upturned faces in the car window are seen below, and friendly greetings exchanged with some member of the family. I must go and let this train by, is a common saying of little Emma, at the blowing of the train whistle. On one side of this novel mound, of natural formation occupied by the house, a deep ravine projects its winding way into the hills beyond. On the other side a cove, covered by forest trees, encircles a bold spring that breaks out in boiling, gushing billows from the earth, whirls in the pool excavated for the spring, and goes bounding and rollicking down its narrow pebbled bottom guage, into the creek below. The roar of its waters supplies ceaseless music for the home. Its murmurs in the dead of night speak as in the hush of bygone years that linger in saddened memories, or whis-

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per as the voice of angels that echo in joy from the bright shores of the glory world. The wooing notes of the cooing dove may be heard from the adjacent tree tops. The shrill call of the partridge rings out in the bottom lands below. The spectral warning of the midnight owl in the nearby swamps haunts the disturbed slumber of the sleeper. Here on this mound-like hill, in this unpretentious house which nestles beneath the wide spreading branches of an immense water oak, once lived a remarkable child, so winning in the rare beauty of his life that a call is made for the chronicle of his memory, given in the pages that follow.

ADNER WARD—HIS INFANCY.

John Adner Ward was his full name, but as he was familiarly known and called Adner by the home circle and friends, this will be his name in this sketch of his life. Adner's infancy began in deep and anxious concern. He was the child of prayer. His parents had spent twelve years of

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their married life before he come to brighten the home. His mother was a woman cast in a large mould. She was stoutly built, with a strong face and discerning mind, rigid ideas of right and wrong, and given to the practical and spiritual ideals of life. The father was also a man of strength, bright, genial, tactful, upright and successful in business. They were married at the ages of twenty-one and two, and were happily joined in the joys and struggles of life. They had been brought up on a farm in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, and were trained from youth in the social privileges and domestic duties of rural life. The first years of their married life were spent in the parental Ward home, till five years ago in 1905, they moved to Eolin, Bibb County, where they now reside. A sermon preached on the number seven, by the pastor at the end of five years of their married life, made a deep impression on the ardent spirit of the faithful wife. In the Scriptures seven expresses

totality, completed circle, or perfection. It is the prophetic number, based on the seven colors of the rainbow, the seven octaves in music, the seven senses, and the seven days of the week. By it she was incited to pray to the Lord for the gift of a son. By faith Isaac was given to Sarah. In answer to prayer, Hannah was blest with the gift of Samuel. The Lord's graciousness to these honored servants of old fixed the convictions of the mother, and she believed the same Lord would likewise bestow the like favor upon her. Seven years her faith was tested, but at the end the home was gladdened with the coming of the subject of our story. In gift and prayer he was dedicated to the Lord by both parents. Their faith was great that in some way the child would greatly honor the Lord, and render to the world conspicuous service. As an infant, Adner filled the hearts, and was the chief occupant of the home circle. Parents and grandparents vied in attentions to him. The Grandfather Ward, in

whose home they now lived, and who was a man of rare ability and keen insight, often said, There is something remarkable about this babe; look at his penetrating eyes and discerning expression of face. I shall not live to see his greatness, but you may. He died when Adner was ten months old. He was the special attraction of the community, and the charm of all visitors. His beauty, quick thought and winning ways captured all hearts. Before the age of three years his originality was marked by special names he gave to different objects. the rooster he named, too, too, the hen, Sheo; the horse, woe-back; the hog suey; the cow, mon; the cat, litley; water, seep; fire, pus. Other familiar objects were likewise named by him in his own childish way. One day he saw the cat jump on the back of a horse when he cried out in great glee, See, mamma, litley on woe-back. In the face of corrections and usage he persisted in using these pet names exclusively until they wore off in the growing habits of boy-

hood. Mrs. Woodall, a nearby neighbor, said of him: "We often went to the house to see the baby; he was so bright and cheerful. He began to try to talk before he was a year old, and had his own names for so many things, and was so bright and cute in his manners. We all thought there had never been such a baby. He seemed so knowing and quick to catch on." In speaking of his frequent morning visits to them, at the age of four years, when several members of the family were sick, she said: "I shall never forget the bright, cheerful little face that came every morning and would say hello, calling each one by name, then would turn to me and say, 'How do you feel thiis morning, Mrs. Woodall?' I prayed for you last night; did you pray?" I was reckless, and the child would look to knowingly in my face, I did not know what to answer. His parents gave his and ten of his little associates a Christmas dinner, followed by Santa Claus, personated by a masked person that distributed

presents. When all were seated at the table, Adner looked around and asked, "Who will ask a blessing?" In response his father came in and returned thanks. Adner was the happiest one on the occasion. He seemed to appreciate the dinner and the presents of each one. He was thoughtful and watchful, often calling to mama to help this or that one while Mrs. Ward was serving the children. When Santa Claus appeared some of the children were frightened and screamed for fear, but in his childish but manly way he quieted them by saying, "Sand boy won't hurt you." That evening my son got a thorn in his thumb. Adner stood and looked on sympathetically and said, "I am sorry for you, Mr. Joe. I will ask the Good Man [his name for Jesus] to make it get well." It seemed that he always expected help from the Lord. All of us had to watch ourselves, for if we said anything rough he would tell us, that was not good, it was ugly, and say, "Do you pray?" At that time I did not pray, but

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that innocent face and child voice, I have never forgotten. It has haunted me till now, I never lie down without trying to pray, and I hope to live so as to meet the praying boy, and feel sure he is now where there is no need of prayer.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL PUPIL.

At the age of two years Adner was carried by his parents to the Sunday school. His name was enrolled as a scholar and regularly called, to which he gleefully answered from the start. He soon began to repeat the Golden Text. He joined in the singing before he could carry a tune. His parents taught him the Sunday school lessons, read to him the Scriptures and told him Bible stories. Most of these stories he learned before he could read, and in simplest childlike faith believed them all without a doubt. He became fond of answering questions in the open Sunday school, and would startle those present with his apt and ready replies. He was deeply moved by the lesson, Jesus the Good Shepherd,

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feeding the sheep and caring for the lambs. When the Crucifixion was explained to him and the Savior's sufferings dwelt upon, the tears ran down his cheeks freely, and he sobbed deeply. On children's day and special occasions he was always bright and joyous, and ever had his penny or nickle to give. He delighted to give to every cause from the first. He was devoted to the Sunday school and church. They were the charm and inspiration of his week day life. His aspirations and joys turned to the Sabbath, and its privileges to him were sacred and sweet.

HIS HOME LIFE.

He was kept by his parents strictly in the home, and never allowed to associate with other than select companions. They constantly taught him the Scriptures, and brought him up strictly in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. His mother and father made themselves his intimate daily associates, and had their greatest pleasure in his companionship. His boyish prattle and

charming personality made their lives joyous, and in turn their company became his attraction and charm. He greatly admired his father and yearned to be like him, and became his most intimate associate and his mother's favorite and most entertaining comrade. They lovingly guided his thought and directed his footsteps, and he delighted to obey them in every wish. He prided himself most of all in being manlike, and would say I am a boy now but I want to make a good man. From the first his parents taught him to trust God in all things. He was the center of attraction with his little associates, who counted it an honor to play with Adner. To them he was affectionate, considerate and manly. Their attachments for him became very strong. Some of them still weep over his death, and beg the parents not to send them to school any more, since Adner is not there. He heartily enjoyed every species of childish sport. The bat, the ball, the harp, the horn, the building blocks, the

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marbles, the whip, the wagon, the goat, the tri-cycle, were all his. With them and his friends he rollicked and romped, kept the home merry and the community entertained, and amused. He was whole souled and light hearted in play as in everything else.

HIS SCHOOL DAYS.

Adner attended several schools, and quickly became attached to his teachers, and deeply enlisted in his studies. School life with him was but an opportunity for entertainment and fun. Merry and rollicksome his teachers, his books, his playmates, and his studies, were but the instruments of his sport. He was ambitious to learn and habitually stood at the head of his classes. To the delight and amusement of his teachers and fellow pupils, like the bounding cork on the cresting wave, he made the school his plaything and the object of his love, and in turn became the idol of the school, enlisting all

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minds and commanding the love and esteem of all hearts. He prided himself on good lessons, and promptness and obedience to his teachers. At home he made his studies a plaything, converted the house into a school room, answered to his own name which he would call, with that of his adopted sister, made his mother teacher, and had a real recitation before going to school, all in fun. He was enthusiastic in each lesson and often startled his teachers with his bright and ever ready answers to questions. He was musical in nature, and fond of the hymns sung in the school, and had learned many old time songs which he delighted to sing and play on the harp. He was an expert with the harp, and mixed his music in with all his merrymaking and sport. During his life he wore out many of these little pocket instruments, and had one in his pocket when he died.

HIS CONVERSION.

Adner was converted at the age of five years.

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His interest in the Scriptures and in religion was intense. Religious conversation always entertained him. He took deep interest in the Sunday school lesson, and in the church services. He was fond of preaching and the preachers. He was ever ready to hear the Bible read, and delighted to talk with his parents and others about its truths. He was fond of prayer and prayed over everything. As the pastor Rev. G. W. Freeman rode up to the house on one occasion he saw the child on his knees in prayer in the nearby woods. In carrying on a revival meeting in the community the same preacher appealed to the congregation to pray for him personally. The sympathies of the child were so aroused that he went forward and said I will pray for you Budder Seeman, hugging him around the leg. During a drought his father expressed fears that he would lose his corn and pea crop for want of rain. Adner said papa, can't you pray for rain? Returning home he prayed for

rain from the top of a woodpile, and it came very soon. The crop was not lost. One of his playmates was unexpectedly taken from his home to an adjacent community, which distressed him greatly. He prayed for his return, begging his mother and pastor to join him in it. The next Sunday morning he came rushing in joyous glee into the house saying mama, Jim has come back. He then ran out, met Jim, greeted him heartily and said, I prayed for you to come back Jim, and that is the reason you came. Ain't you glad I prayed for you to come Jim? He fully believed the Lord sent him back in answer to his prayer. When five years of age his mother was thought by the doctors to be fatally ill. During her prolonged illness the father often resorted to a nearby strip of woods to pray for the sick mother, accompanied by the child. Little Adner was aware of the dark shadow that hung over the home, and keenly felt the sorrow, and joined in the father's prayer, sometimes with

him and sometimes to himself. On one Sunday morning in his father's absence he went alone to pray in the woods, and when kneeling by an old stump, pouring out his soul in prayer to God, he suddenly became happy, arose, slapping his hands, crying, and laughing for joy, with the tears streaming down his cheeks. He started to the house with his young life lit up by the heavenly flame, to carry the good news to his mother, but was stopped at the stable by some visiting playmates, and seeing them his feelings subsided. For two years the story of his joyous secret was not told to any one. After this however he often said, I've got religion, why can't I get baptized? I've got religion. I've prayed. In crossing a creek enroute to church this was often his plea. Why can't I get baptized? I've got religion. I've prayed. He was persistent in the spirit of his religious concern, often weeping and sobbing, asking his parents to pray for him, saying Do you pray for me? You are not

in earnest or your prayers would be answered. On account of his age his appeals were often not heeded by his parents. In the home one day, with his face buried in his hands, he said, Mama do you pray for me that I may get religion? I pray you may get it when you are old enough, she said. But he said I want it now. One night when his mother was playing hymns on the organ and his father talking about religion, and specially about what became of the lost, he began sobbing, when his father asked him if he wanted religion, he said yes and I want you to pray for me now. The parents and little Emma knelt with Adner and prayed while his soul in sobs sought the Lord. One day, when about seven years of age, his mother read to him about the Good Shepherd and told of his love and care for the lambs, when he said, Mama how do I know when I get religion? She said, When you give your heart and life to the Good Man (her name for the Savior) and trust him in all things,

he forgives your sins and makes you his disciple. Then you know you are God's child which makes you happy. Then you feel good and are full of joy, want to join the church and be with God's people. He quickly replied if that is it I've got it. When did you get it she asked. He then gave the simple child story of his conversion two years before in the woods at the old stump when alone praying for his sick mother. The following are his own words. You remember the big stump close to the bars where papa used to pray when you were sick; one Sunday morning when papa was gone I prayed by myself, and all at once I felt good and jumped up and cried and laughed and slapped my hands and tears came out of my eyes, and I wanted to tell you and papa about it and started to the house to do so, but met the boys at the stable and seeing them my feelings quit.

With a full heart his mother at once wrote a note and sent it by the child to his father at

work in the field, saying, I believe our boy has religion. The father anxiously engaged him in conversation on his religion when he gave the same simple story of his wondrous change. His father told him to trust Jesus, and in no case would he deceive him, and after that encouraged him to believe he was a Christian. Adner now sought the preachers and teachers and talked personal religion with them. Religion was now the absorbing theme that constantly enkindled his enthusiasm. He wanted to join the church and get baptized, as he always expressed it. He sought the pastor, Eld. W. G. Hubbard, and talked the matter over widely and much. During a meeting held at the church he asked permission of his mother that he might relate his experience to Eld. G. W. Freeman, and if Brother Freeman said he had religion and his mother did not care, he would join the church and get baptized. One evening he came in great haste, when she was busy with a teacher, urging her

consent, to see Brother Freeman at once as he was about to leave. He returned from the conference in exultant joy, saying, Brother Freeman says I've got religion. Now I want to go to the store and tell papa, Brother Freeman says I've got religion. Reaching the store in haste, he told his story to his overjoyed father, and added, Mama says if you don't care, I can join the church and get baptized. Though the father hesitated owing to the child's age he yielded his consent. After this when in the midst of a revival conducted by the pastor, Eld W. G. Hubbard, at Haysop church, Adner came one evening to his father desiring to join the church that night. The request was granted, and he was full of the thought of it all the afternoon. Enroute to church that night, he asked his mother if he should go to sleep, to wake him up at the time, that he might be sure to join that night. Like other children he some times went to sleep in church and especially so when the services were

prolonged. It is needless to say he remained awake that night, but when the door was opened his father suggested that he wait till the morrow. Sadly he yielded to the request, as his father's desire was always his absolute law. He was afraid the meeting would close without an opportunity to join. He became nervous and almost wild and talked about nothing else that night. The child's deep interest in religion and remarkable Christian experience had made its impress on all who attended the meeting. It was understood that Adner would join the church on Sunday morning. The large country church was more than packed with an anxious crowd, with many strangers curious to see the much talked of child, and to hear his childhood experience of grace. Adner reached the church rather late, and meeting several of his playmates on the ground, found a seat with them in the back of the church. When the door of the church was opened by the pastor he won-

dered if the child would quit his mates, press through the crowded aisles and face the great throng of humanity now anxiously awaiting the appearance of the remarkable child. When he seemed to delay his coming the pastor directed his gaze in that direction and seemed in the act of prompting Adner, when the father who was in front caught the idea and motioned the pastor not to do so, as he wanted him to come of his own prompting. In the midst of the singing, with pleasing face, he picked up his little cap, and with bold step pressed his way through the crowd to the front, where he was welcomed by the pastor. When his turn came for examination, on his Christian experience, the pastor stood the child up on a pew and asked him to relate his experience in his own way and words. He told the story of his mother's sickness, of his father's prayers, of the frequented woods for prayer, of the large stump, and his kneeling there, of his sudden and happy feelings, his

slapping of hands, laughing, crying, and shedding tears, his overflowing joy, and of his two years' craving to join the church and get baptized. The sweet face, the beautiful person, the charming manner, the musical voice, the rare and heartfelt experience in one so young, with the modest and unawed courage before the immense crowd, all greatly impressed the assemblage, and made him the admiration and center of attraction to all. His bright mind and rich Christian experience were spoken of far and wide. He was baptized in the pool near the spring, at the old Haysop church, which he had joined. The cliffs encircling the spring formed a vast amphitheater that was filled with the immense throng of people, which indeed were a real crowd of witnesses, viewing as in the days of yore on the banks of the Jordan the sacred ceremonies of the sublime Christian ordinance. In the same cheerful and courageous mood he went down into the baptismal waters, and in

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the likeness of his Savior's death was buried in the watery grave, and arising in the likeness of his resurrection. When dressing after th baptism he said to his mother, Mama, I feel so good and happy, and exulted in his joyous feelings all the way home. He made request of his mother, that he should not wear his baptismal clothes any more, but keep them until grown, that he might see them in after life.

HIS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

At the age of eight years the church at Eolin was organized, when he with his parents and adopted sister joined, and were numbered with its charter members. Adner was constant in his attendance at church, Sunday School and prayer meeting. He was enthusiastic in reciting the Sunday School lessons, and always used his privilege of voting in the church conference. His child voice would be heard to say aye or nay, as he chose to vote. In a revival held that summer he arose and testified for Jesus, and in a few

words exhorted others to a religious life. He took delight in asking the blessing at the table, and would often lead the prayer in the home. He was never called on to lead in the public worship of the church. He claimed it a privilege to give to every cause presented in the church. He took pride in making and keeping his own money and out of which he always made his gifts. On one occasion the pastor called attention of the church to the want of a stove. Adner was the first to rise and say, "Here Brother Freeman, here is my nickle to start it." The money was quickly raised. His sympathies were deeply touched for his cousin, who had lost her house by fire, and had escaped only in her night clothes. "Here Cousin Martha," said he with tears in his eyes, "is a quarter to help you buy some more clothes." He was ever ready for religious conversation, and had special delight for the company of his pastor and of pious people. His case deeply enlisted the pastor, who with much

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concern, saw in the boy a heavenly gift of rare promise and great brilliancy. He joyfully guided his enquiring thought, aided him in solving the problems of the Word, and fed him on the heavenly manna, and in it all directed his footsteps in the golden pathway that led onward and upward in the higher life. Rev. G. W. Freeman, a former pastor, said of him, "I knew Adner from a little tot up to the time of his death. He was a remarkable child. At an early age he manifested a desire to do something for the Master. His faith in God was indeed wonderful as well as beautiful. In many of the trying ordeals of life, when strong men's hearts would quail, this boy with his simple faith in God, believing he would hear and answer prayer, would still hope and pray on. On one occasion when his mother had been given up to die, little Adner said "Mama can not die yet for I am praying for her that her life may be spared to us." During my pastorate of the church he would often climb up in my lap

and say, "Brudder Seeman, I love the Lord, too." His great delight was to talk about religion. He would get down on his knees and pray from the time he was three or four years old, on till his death. He made a profession of religion when he was about five years of age. He wanted to join the church and asked me to speak to his father and mother seeking their consent for him to do so. "If I am small I am not too little to join the church," said he. "I am not too little to die, and I want to be ready." He was truly a great child.

He was quick to learn and easily led when shown the truth, but no appeal could swerve him from his convictions of right. His life was modeled on the principles of strictest honor, and all were impressed with the beauty and correctness of his high ideals. At the age of nine years he was elected as messenger from his church to the Bibb County Association. In real enthusiasm he went to the meeting, and with other messengers

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from his church was received as a member of that body, and sat with the brethren in counsel. He was called the little delegate there and was afterward known among churches by that title.

HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

In build Adner was neither blocky nor spare, but symmetrically formed in every limb and feature. His head was erect and modest, his hair black and silky, his complexion white, smooth and rich, his forehead full, his cheeks round and rosy, his nose Grecian and delicately chiseled, his eyebrows impressively arched, his mouth expressing sentiment and intelligence, his chin well formed but not full, his eyes a peculiar brown hazel, penetrating and discerning, with a countenance lit up in great beauty, and constantly varying expression. His hand was large, with long, well tapered fingers. He was not vain nor fastidious but modest and simple in dress. He was at home in any garb, and it was always the boy that adorned the clothes. His person ever

lent a charm to his dress. He was uniformly cheerful, and fond of reasoning, and while his notions and impressions were strong, he was not stubborn. He esteemed counsel and had a mild temper, but was prompt to resent a wrong, and in the absence of his parents and teachers, had more than once scrapped with his playmates. When aroused, which required much provocation, his onsets were furious till the battle was ended. When peace was made he cherished no malice for his former foe, but would divide with him his best gift. When his mates became wayward in using bad language, or in doing ugly things, he would stop, and by refusal to participate, and sometimes by open protest, would rebuke them. He never betrayed his associates in their wrong doing, to parents or teachers. He was fond of meeting strangers, and often sought their acquaintance, by personal introduction, and was ever cordial and polite, raising his hat to ladies. He was quiet and manly, yet full of glee,

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aptly discerning the proprieties of each occasion, and artful always in entertaining company. He was the boy chum of the community, and the center of attraction wherever he went. He was a sweet talker, entertained himself with a wide range of subjects, and always eagerly enlisted others in his thoughts, and in turn was entertained by the thoughts and conditions of others. Two pictures, one at the age of three and one at seven years accompany this sketch. His charming person is seen in the latter.

HIS TEMPTATIONS.

Adner was strictly trained by his parents, to say no ugly word, and to condemn such when said by others, and to shun the company of those who used them. One of his temptations was inflicted by a wicked boy, who visited the home one day, in the absence of the parents, who cursed with such ease and heroic depravity, that he inspired Adner's admiration, and who was soon joined with him, in his awe inspiring tirades of

profanity. On the mother's return, she learned of the new role of wickedness, with her little hero, banished the baleful associate, ruined the rod and saved her child. When charged with the sin by his mother, he refused to deny it, and took the whipping like a man. That night and the next morning he seemed greatly humiliated, and looked cast down all day. Late in the evening he came in a penitent manner and voice, and said to his mother, Mama, I've said no bad word today. I asked the Good Man to forgive me and he has. Another temptation was brought by a negro boy whom he met in the road, and after some play, the darkey took from him his whip. In the struggle to get it back his passion was greatly aroused, and accompanying the fierce blows he inflicted on his antagonist he called him a black devil, and other similar wicked names. The heavy blows quickly restored the whip, and though Adner was victor he was now reviled by his conquered foe, who threatened to tell his

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mama of his wickedness. Then a truce was made and Adner promised the boy a dollar not to tell on him. The price was to be paid in certain articles of goods to be gotten by Adner from his father's store. The child's purse was empty at this time, and being unable to pay for them he went to steal them, but his conscience failed him, and he left the store without them, went back to the boy, and told him he would take the whipping rather than steal, that he might therefore tell his mama, that he would not steal the goods for pay. The darkey true to his threat, told the mother, and Adner true to his expectations was again nurtured with the rod. One Scripture lesson taught him by his mother, that greatly impressed his life, was the wickedness of Eli's sons. Unrestrained by their father, a priest and judge of Israel, they became grossly immoral, in the house of God, and committed sacrilege in stealing the sacrifices off the very altar. Their debauched career was held up to him with the

beauty of Samuel's life, and the terrible curse of God's wrath visited upon them she likewise contrasted with the exalted honors that came to Samuel. The beauty of little Samuel's life had ever been an inspiration to Adner. As likewise did his soul revolt in great loathing at the baseness of Eli's sons. The one nerved him for noble deeds and great triumphs, and the other, warned him of dangerous pitfalls, of ruined lives, and of sure calamity and disgrace.

HIS VIEWS OF LIFE.

Farming was his chosen profession. His early inclinations to the farm were strong. He was keenly interested in the lands and in the farm products. The land, the seed, the planting, the cultivation, and the reaping, all enlisted him. Unlike most boys he was fond of work, and had delight in hard labor. He worked of his own accord. At the age of six years he picked fifty pounds of cotton by noon, and had need to be restrained by his parents from hard work. In this,

as in other things he did, he made work a play and went at it rollicking, singing, playing on his harp, and joking with his fellow laborers. He made the farm a field of sport for romp and fun. He took a deep interest in his father's store, and would help haul the freight, mark the goods and make sales to the customers. Some of his marks may still be seen on the goods in his own hand writing. He was more and more enlisted in the details of his father's business. One day he asked his father to teach him the cost marks of his goods. His father thinking him too young to know so important a secret, refused him, and he wept over it. He took it to mean that he was unworthy to know it, which gave him sore grief. He seemed to feel that he was ever worthy of his father's utmost confidence.

More and more he became his father's daily companion and counselor. He was constantly planning for the future, when his parents would grow old, and the burdens of life fall on him.

One fixed purpose in it all was he would never leave them, but would make them the objects of his daily thought, of his love, and of his labors. When asked by his mother if he would like to be a preacher, he said no, it would take him too much from you and papa. Then a dentist, he said no, that will hurt folks. He was sensitive over suffering, and greatly sympathized with those in pain. His father's knee was his accustomed place when in the home. One day when fondling with his father in his lap, his father said to him, son, when will you quit sitting on me? His quick reply was, till I am grown, then you will sit on me. He was intensely affectionate and prayed every night, and often prayed for special objects. One night he continued kneeling after prayer, his mother thinking he was asleep spoke to him, when he said I was praying for Emma. He was rapidly coming into the larger view and more definite purposes of life, and

in it all was led by his parents and guided by the Lord.

HIS CONTROVERSIES.

He had a contention with some wild boys, who guyed him by saying he found God behind a stump. Adner endured this mockery of his religion meekly and quietly, and soon gained the respect and confidence of the scoffers, and they became his fast friends. Some Paedo Baptists urged upon him that he was too small to be immersed. In reply he cited John the Baptist, as authority, and gave a definite account of the Savior's baptism, saying he must follow wherever the Savior went; that if needful for Jesus to be baptized to fill all righteousness, and thus set the example, he also must likewise obey the command. The negroes in the community became much interested in Adner's religion, and would prod him with questions, and scripture quotations, just to hear his ready wit and sensible answers. In passing by a wash place where sev-

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eral negro Methodist women were washing clothes, they raised with him the baptismal question, saying it was not water that saved, that there was nothing in the quantity, that a drop was as good as an ocean, that sprinkling or pouring was just as good as immersion. His reply was, why then do you immerse the clothes you are washing to get the dirt out? Why don't you sprinkle a little water on them and carry them along? Their laughing reply was, You got me den John. His baptism was a sacred event in Adner's life. Everybody in the community seemed interested in Adner's religion and talked much about the strong faith of the remarkable child.

HIS SICKNESS.

In the summer of 1907, when in his tenth year, Adner was taken with Appendicitis, and for several weeks gradually declined in health. His condition alarmed his parents and friends, and saddened the whole community. A pall of gloom

seemed to spread over the whole neighborhood, and old and young, white and black, spoke in bated breath of Adner's failing health. Could it be, that the angel like child, had been called to join the angel throng above, and thus leave a blighted home, and an aching void in many hearts? The best medical skill of the local talent was exhausted, earnest prayer from the community joined with that of the parents and the child, went up to God in his behalf. An operation was finally decided upon and he must go to Birmingham to have it done. While this trip was pending Adner was greatly tried in mind and heart. It cast a dark shadow over his bright vision of faith. In faith he submitted his case unto the Lord and to the direction of his mama and papa. He would seem shocked to feel he had disobeyed his parents. He never murmured but endured his sufferings with cheerfulness and great patience. He dreaded the trip and the operation, and sought to postpone it to the lat-

est hour. One Sunday while his father read the Bible, he put his face on his mother's and said Mama I feel good. I am going to get well if they don't operate on me. After that he often said to his parents, I am going to get well, if they don't operate on me. Temporary relief did come that gave a gleam of hope, but the disease quickly renewed its hold and the dark shadow returned with increased blackness. He was bright and cheerful in all his sickness, his only gloom being over his trip to Birmingham, and at seeing the tears of loved ones. One day he threw his arms around his father's neck and said Papa you are too good to me. I am not worthy of you to be so good to me as you are. In broken accents his father replied, No son, you have been a good boy to your mama and papa, and are worthy of the best and papa will do all he can and spend everything necessary to save you. One day in playing the graphophone the hymn Rock of Ages, was played, and when the last verse

was reached, being the following words,

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
And I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne,
Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

He said to his papa,, I'd like to hear that when I'm dying. He was fond of hymns and delighted always to join in the singing. One day when sitting on the floor playing with a toy he said, Mama if I die will I go to heaven? If you have religion you will she replied. Does everybody who has religion go to heaven when they die? he asked. Yes, she said. Do you feel you have religion? Sometimes I feel I do, and sometimes I feel I don't, was his reply. I was lying in my hammock thinking about my condition and thought I might have to go off and be operated on. I went to praying and it seemed to me like some-

thing said I would get well without an operation, and I will too, mama, I will. Then he said, Mama if I die what kind of a coffin will papa put me in? The prettiest one we can get, she said. Then he continued, Mama if you were to die, I would try to get papa to put you in one like Aunt Malvina was buried in. By this he meant to say he wanted to be buried in one like his Aunt's. He was however buried in a beautiful white casket. Her's was dark. When packing his trunk his mother evaded him, but he followed her up and begged that his Bible and Sunday school book be put in the trunk. He also put in some pomegranates, saying, these are for the hospital nurse if she is good to me. He asked the blessing at the last meal in the home, but left his plate unturned. His appetite was gone.

Before he left, many friends visited the home, to bid the sick boy adieu. He had a kind word and utterances of triumph for each one. His vision of faith ever seemed bright. Mr. Met-

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calf asked Adner, if you die under the operation, do you think you will go to heaven? He said, I have prayed if it be the Lord's will I would like to live, to do all the good I can in the world, but if it be his will that I die. I want his will done. He said this not the least excited, but in a calm and strong tone of voice. The same friend said of him. I often thought after watching his every day life, surely some day he will preach the gospel, and do a great work for the Lord. As the wheels of the vehicle glided through the waters of a pond, en route to the depot, he exclaimed, I've hauled many loads of freight across here, but I may never haul another, this crossing may be my last. He seemed impressed he was going away not to return. At the depot a crowd had gathered to catch a last glimpse of the pale face they had learned to love, and to waive him a loving farewell. On the train, a tingling sound came in his ear, when he said, Mama, I hear a death bell. She made light of that old time su-

perstition, that a ringing in the ear was a warning of death in the home. Then he said, Mama, when one dies is he alone? No, she said, Jesus is with them and the angels come to them and minister to them and keep them company. You know the angels came to Lazarus in his death and carried him to Abraham's bosom, which is the paradise of God. He said, Mama, I'm not afraid to die. She said, son, do you think you would go to heaven if you were to die? He said yes'm I think I will. You know Jesus said, In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also. Jesus is my true friend and will be present with me and help me, when I leave you. She said son, it may be Jesus will make you a ministering spirit and send you to guard your mama and papa when he takes you. Without a tear,

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he said yes'm, and I know I'd like to do it.

HIS DEATH.

When they reached the hospital the doctor assured him he would cure him sound and well, and appealed to him to be a man. When left with his father and mother the night before the operation, after the assurances of the Doctor his mother asked him, if he was willing to be operated on. When the doctor was talking to me I like to got in the notion, but since he went away, I don't know whether I can or not, he said. I can't do anything but pray to the Lord and trust him and do as you and papa say. It will not be done if you object, said his mother. Papa knows best was his prompt and final reply. When being dressed for the operation he asked, if I die who will dress me? Don't let strangers do it. I'll do it said his mama. The hopeful but heavy hearted mother then embraced the frail form and printed a loving kiss on the faded lips of her precious child and left him and went from the room

not knowing it was the last. She was excluded from the room during the operation and saw him no more till the death angel had borne his spirit away. Before the drug was given to put him to sleep, he begged to hold his father's hand. The two hands clasped each other and held till the boy's grip was relaxed in the stupor. After the operation he recovered consciousness, and had only lucid intervals of thought for four hours, when the pallor of death spread over his beautiful face, the light went out of his eyes, his groaning hushed, and the child of promise and of hope had fled from the earth. During these last dark hours the father in hopeless distress went to and fro from the sick chamber to the anguish stricken mother bearing in bated breath the appalling whispers that came from the sinking boy, till the fatal message came that all was over. Just before breathing his last, the attendants caught the names of Daniel and of John the Baptist, that he called. The spirits of these he-

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roes of faith it may be were pluming his spirit for the glory flight, or it may be, he was greeting them from the shores of time, and shouting to them the victor's triumph, as he went. This as it may be, we know death is the Christian's signal triumph, and that Adner Ward was ready for his crown. He was prepared for burial in the home of his uncle, by the loving hands of the heart broken mother and father and by sorrowing friends. He was buried near Haygler, on the Mobile & Ohio railroad, at the old Liberty church. Many friends came on the two trains that came from each end of the line that day, and many in vehicles from the surrounding country, to pay the last tribute of respect and love to the wondrous boy whom all delighted to esteem and love in life, and to honor in death. A gloom was cast over the whole section of country as far as little Adner was known, and the large crowd wept together as they talked of the beauty of his young life, and joined in the sad rights of the funeral

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obsequies. The services were led by the pastor, Rev. W. G. Hubbard, who preached from the text—He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down. Job 14:2. He said in part,—1. Childhood is the flower age of life. 2. The flower age is that of fragrance and beauty. 3. The flower is frail and is soon cut down and withers. 4. Jesus loved these flowers when on earth. 5. Jesus gives them a joyous welcome and a crown of glory in heaven. Said he, Adner was a bright and lovely boy, and dearly loved his parents, his Sunday school and his God. His faith was strong and he constantly breathed the atmosphere of prayer. I often talked to him concerning his religion, and on more than one occasion he has told me when and where he found the Lord precious to his trusting soul. He was a bright Christian, and for one of his age, was well acquainted with the Scriptures. He was a cheerful giver and when a messenger to the Association and the different objects for contribution were presented he went

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and joyfully made his contribution with a beaming face. During my pastorate I have received into the various churches more than 2,000 members, and can say, without doubt, no candidate ever gave a brighter Christian experience than he. One touching incident that occurred at the funeral was the Sunday school of which he was a member came forward to the casket in a body to take a final look at the sacred form of their little comrade, now still in the hush of death, while the great congregation sat weeping in silence. They seemed to say, We have followed you now as far as we can go; hereafter we will follow your example till we join you in the everlasting home. The pastor penned the following verses as expressing the truth with Adner:

The king may have his palaces,
No envy stings my heart;
Grant him all his soul desires,
I have the better part.

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Ah, give the rich their mansions fine,
Where'er they chance to roam,
But for me my rest is sweet,
In my beautiful heavenly home.

The grave was on the slope of the hill, in the Ward lot, in the old church burial ground, surrounded by the graves of several generations of his kindred dead who had gone before. Amid streaming tears, stifling groans and breaking hearts the benediction was pronounced, committing the little treasure to the silent tomb, earth to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust, to await the sound of the angels trump on the resurrection morn that would call the sleeping dead from the hush of the grave to life eternal, and the righteous to pleasures forever more. When the sun was sinking beneath the western hills the sad assemblage silently filed out of the enclosure and sorrowfully wended their way to their homes, leaving the little new-made mound alone in the

city of the dead. Adner Ward was with his God. A statue of Italian marble, a true likeness in form and feature, representing the age and size of Adner at his death, will rest above the grave, and as the ages come and go his white, silent form as some guardian angel will stand as a sentinel over the sacred dust of the silent dead.

GRIEF OF THE PARENTS.

It is needless to say that the parents were crushed, with every purpose shattered and every hope blasted. They naturally raised the question: "Why the answer to our prayer? Why the gift of such priceless gem? Why such consummate happiness, and then why such calamity, such blasted hope, broken life and ruthless misery? Our faith was like Hannah's, but Samuel lived and adorned the walks of men, while ours died. We prayed as did the nobleman for his son, and his son recovered, but ours died. Why this setting of the morning sun when it had but arisen? Have we sinned, and is this a necessary

chastisement? We have tried to live righteous lives. Is God mocking us, or where is the fault?" These questions sorely tried the hearts of the devoted parents, whose only trust was in God, and whose every hope was in the child. They cherished but one thought in life, and that was the raising of God's bright gift, so mercifully given them, exclusively for his glory. After an earnest review of all the circumstances attending the sad providence, in great anguish of soul, and deep heart-searching prayer, in the light of God's promises, the Lord helped them to solve the problem of the mysterious disaster. The conclusion finally reached was, a mistake had been made in performing the operation, that the voice of God uttered in the child's faith had been ignored in the decision of the doctors. Adner was profoundly impressed that he would get well without an operation. The child was Heaven-born. He had come into the new life, in the new birth, and was thus individualized as a child

of the Heavenly Father. Now, did God speak through him? It was but reasonable that the Heavenly Father should speak through his son, in a vital personal issue. Shall the faith of the child, or the judgment of the physicians control? was the weighty question for the parents to decide. Human wisdom was brought into contrast and sharp antagonism with faith in God in the case. Earthly judgment prevailed and the child, humanly speaking, was brought to an untimely end, unnecessarily cut down by fatal human mistake. God had made no mistake, violated no trust, failed in no promise, neither had inflicted any cruel calamity on the devout and faithful parents. He had spoken in unmistakable voice. through his chosen oracle, the faith of the child, and thus made known his will. The case was thus left to human responsibility, skill and judgment. Man's decision determined the fate of the child, and therefore God must be acquitted of all culpability in Adner's untimely death. It was

through blinding tears and in deep heart pangs that the parents finally saw this uncomely truth. In sadness they often reverted to oft-repeated words of the child, "I've prayed and will get well if they don't operate on me." God is not responsible for human mistakes, nor is he the instrument of the calamities wrought by them. Such doctrine is nowhere taught in the Scriptures. He, however, does overrule human mistakes for his glory and for man's good. It is in the light of this gracious truth that the silver lining is seen behind the dark cloud. Though cut down by untimely death, Adner's life was a bright triumph and a finished success. Instead of being a failure, though he died in childhood, his life was unique, beautiful, well rounded and sublime. Viewed from the divine side Adner is seen only in grace and beauty. By the will of man the human failed in him and brought disaster, yet God was working out his purpose in the dark event, and does so in every providence—his love

with the righteous, and his judgments with the wicked. All things work together for good to them that love God. Adner lived out the measure of his days and came to the fullness of his allotment of years. God was honored in Adner's death, and it was for the good of the child and the profit of the living. The divine purpose thus intervenes with the Christian and transforms darkness into light, death into life, and calamity into triumph. In it human responsibility and divine sovereignty, in their seemingly contradictory yet harmonious relations, are seen to strangely blend. Thus seen Adner's life rescued from the darkness and calamity of human mistakes, presents a paragon of glowing beauty and of sublime excellence. Viewed from every standpoint of greatness, except in the prowess of power, in which the vital principles of noble life are conserved and shadowed forth in human experience, his life, though he died at the age of less than ten years, presents a well-attested

model, not only for children, but for mankind. IN HIM THE WORLD'S CHILDHOOD HAS MADE AN IMPERISHABLE RECORD OF EARTHLY EXCELLENCE, AS DOES HIS BRIGHT EXAMPLE IN THE CHRIST LIFE FURNISH A PARAGON OF ETERNAL GREATNESS. This is seen in the following deductions drawn from his remarkable career.

1. *His faith was unobscured by doubt.* Adner walked in the light of eternal day. His vision of faith ever caught the radiance of the unseen, and the glory of the brighter world. To him God was a person, in touch with his creatures, directing every providence, controlling every interest, keeping every creature and appointing the destiny of all men. Doubts and fears were foreign to the life he lived. He walked with God.

2. *Jesus was his companion and friend.* To Adner Jesus was a sublime reality and a personal friend. He believed in him, loved him, walked with him, communed with him, trusted him, and never doubted his friendship or present compan-

ionship. Jesus was his ever-present counsellor and ready burden-bearer. To him he carried all his difficulties and wants, and upon him he cast all his cares. Jesus was his inspiration, his strength and his constant uplift.

3. *To him the Bible was the voice of God.* Adner heard the book read as from the lips of an angel, fresh from the chambers of heaven, or as written by the pen of the scribe of God. To him every story was real, and every truth sacred. Its promises glowed in beauty and in reality, its judgments were terrific and black, its rewards inspiring and grand. The book was the joy and light of his young life.

4. *Obedience was his primal law.* Adner ever held sacred the authority of his parents. Their command or even suggestion with him was final. The very thought of disobedience to them gave him pain. The commands of the Lord he held in holy reverence and with a whole heart he tried to obey them all fully. He revered

his teachers, and held disobedience to them to be a bad offense. With him obedience to rightful authority was a primal law.

5. *Prayer was his vital breath.* Adner believed the Lord knew his wants and heard his prayers always for everything. He seemed to feel that all his wants must be carried to the Lord, and he expected every promise made by the Lord to be fulfilled. He prayed for the temporal just the same as for spiritual blessings, and believed the Lord could send rain, restore health or forgive sins with equal facility. He prayed much and joyfully cultivated the holy privilege of prayer.

6. *He cherished an ardent love for the truth.* The truth in all its phases and volume appealed to him strongly. His passion for it was abiding and real. He loved the truth for the truth's sake. He would quickly resent the temptation to violate the truth, and if pressed against his convictions would cry. Every feeling of his nature,

every purpose of his heart, and every effort and ideal of his young life had its basis in the truth. Truth made up the warp and woof of his very nature.

7. *Love was his moving impulse.* His affections held sway over all his passions and claimed the right-of-way over all things in his life. The strongest and noblest passion of life thus fixed the conditions and formed the ties of earth, and forged and fashioned those of the world to come. He loved and was loved in return. He cherished affection for everything, and for everybody. He lived to love and loved to love. Good will was extended to his enemies. No malice or hate rankled in his heart. He was the embodiment and expression of love.

8. *His industry was vigilant.* He was fond of work. He was naturally industrious. He was no eye-servant, but labored as a freeman, cherishing a relish for it, and ever did it in light-hearted joy and real enthusiasm. Whether in

material interest or Christian duty, for God or for man, his labors were zealous and self-sacrificing, yet he ever intermixed fun and artless play with his work.

9. *His religion was real.* He had been converted. He reveled in the joys of the new life. He was wedded to God and held his inheritance in Heaven. He had been personally saved by a personal Savior, with whom he walked and by whom he was safely kept, in his all-pervading presence. His religion gave him triumph in this life, victory over death and a fadeless heritage of glory in the world to come.

10. *His joy was irrepressible.* He carried a light heart. He hunted for the silver lining and found it behind every cloud. Like the overflowing fountain that ceaselessly sends forth its gushing stream, his spirit rollicked and reveled and gleefully played with every issue of life. His bark was ever on the crested wave. His sail caught every breeze, and his track was made

in the sunshine and not in the shadows.

The charm and enduring beauty of Adner's life are thus found in the great truths he lived. To rehearse them: Faith unobscured by doubt; Jesus the abiding friend; the Bible the voice of God; obedience the primal law; prayer the vital breath; unyielding integrity to truth; love the dominant passion; vigilant industry; religion a vital reality; irrepressible joy. These truths interwoven in life make childhood immortal. For bright record, clearness of vision, high ideals, integrity to the right, and unmixed influence for good, Adner Ward may challenge the adult world for a rival. The truths reflected in his career supply the genius for the strongest characters and the noblest lives. In these truths incarnated in human life are crystallized the elements of enduring manhood that make men great and that give to the world its rulers, its law-givers, and its philosophers, and whether making laws, administering their precepts or enlightening the

people, men are great only as they imbibe them and exert the force of their principles. These truths are the vital stones that form the temple of enduring character, and are also the light that fills that temple with the radiance of quenchless glory.

Our closing thought is, Adner Ward's childhood is immortal. God blessed the earth with the child and not the man. His youth will be unbroken, his childhood will continue and to us he will ever remain in the fixed beauty of boy life. His life is thus stereotyped in the heavenly model. The child-life is the ideal life of glory. Jesus said suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And again prophecy says, "A little child shall lead them." Adner Ward sat on no throne, wore no crown, swayed no senates with overmastering eloquence, commanded no armies, neither fought any great battles, but in his noble child life, freed from the sins of rulers

Adner

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and heroes, he illustrated in a simpler way the principles of true greatness. In him is presented the world's ideal of true excellence, and heaven's standard of real greatness. Jesus gave Heaven's ideal of human life in the little child and Adner Ward furnished the example.

THE END.

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